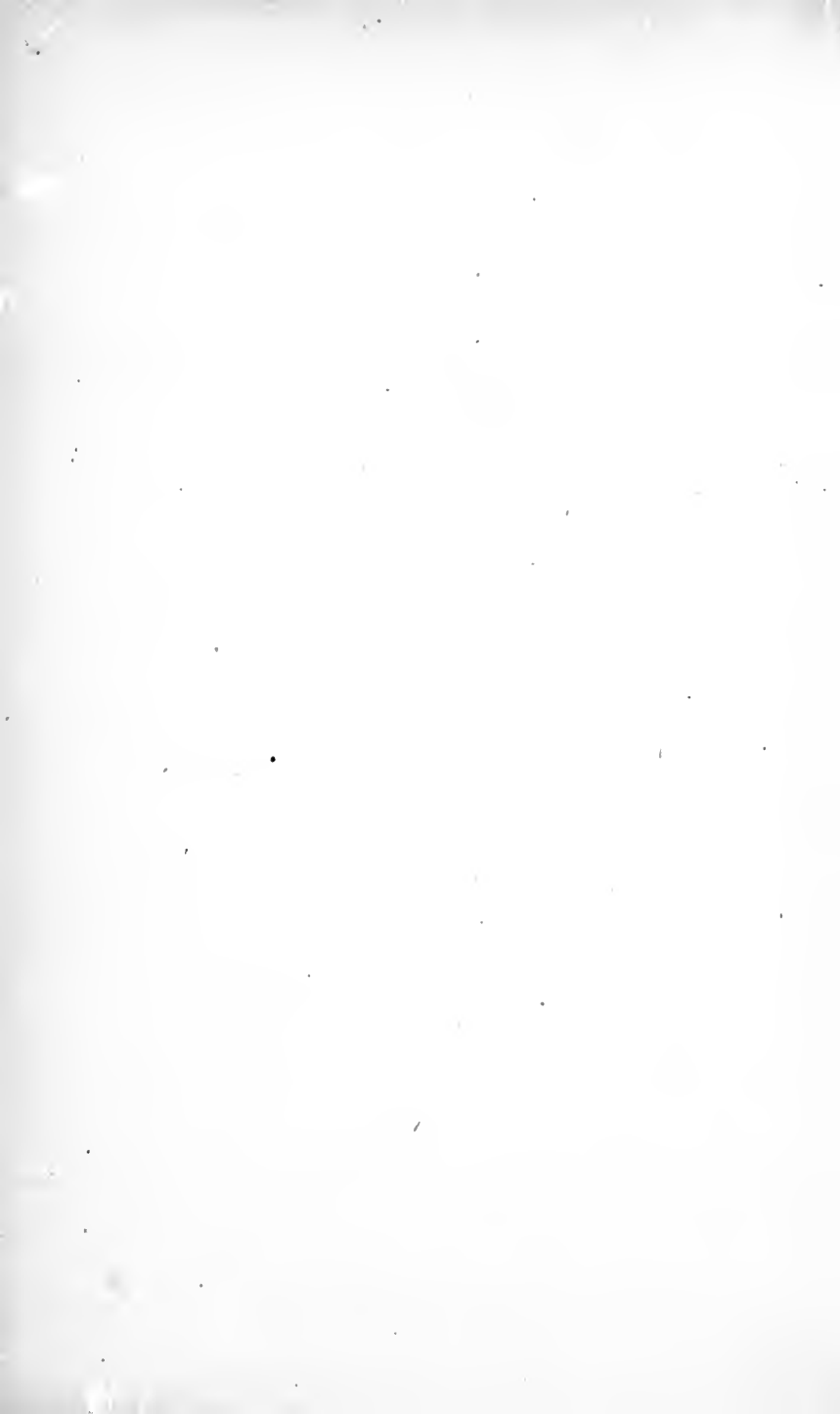




Naylor
NEW TESTAMENT REVISION.

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NEW TESTAMENT REVISION.

THE Revised Version of the New Testament, now offered to the public, will be hailed by at least the most earnest students of the Bible with devout thankfulness and joy. We say by these, for with them the desire to possess the actual words of the inspired original is infinitely greater than their respect, however profound, for the Authorized Version of 1611; and therefore they prefer to part with the old, great though the pain of separation may be, in order to obtain a translation which, though not perfect, more accurately expresses the meaning of the original Greek. From the hands therefore of such, if from none others, the Revisers may expect not only justice but gratitude, and if, under the storm of abuse and adverse criticism with which their patient labors have been assailed, they are tempted to despond, they will do well to remember that cold and biting is the east wind that has uniformly blown on the initiation of every good and elevating work, and therefore these present trials, however harsh and depressing, are only in accordance with the rugged experience of the past. In illustration of the above, we may mention the case of Jerome, who when he gave to the Church and the world his great work, consisting of an original translation into Latin of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, was met, not by the gratitude of his age, but by a perfect tempest of vilification and abuse. That the old Itala version, which up to the time of his translation was the sole form in which the Scriptures were accessible to the Latin world, was hopelessly corrupt, must have been known to many: yet, imperfect and misleading as it was,

the mass preferred it to the new, and actually stigmatised the laborious translator as an enemy and not a friend to the Church.

Another factor in the opposition of to-day is a feeling we must all profoundly respect: we refer to that deep reverential regard which multitudes have for the very words of our English Bible. In its chaste and rhythmical language they first learned at the knees of those now departed the love of God and of His doings towards the children of men. Its various chapters have from time to time been committed to memory, and now in older years, as they think of God, the words of the venerable text come back to them, and any change seems repulsive.

Much, however, as we respect such a sentiment, and reluctantly as we would make any change, yet surely truth must be paramount to every other consideration, and therefore the changes which critical accuracy demands ought most certainly to be made. And here be it remarked that, with regard to the Authorized Version, it was simply a question whether it would be revised, and that speedily, or be practically supplanted by other versions. So earnest in the present day is the desire on the part of Biblical students to know the exact words of inspiration, and so determined are they to have the most advanced translation, that already in many instances they had laid aside the Authorized Version for the more accurate renderings of Alford, Lightfoot, and Ellicott. Had therefore the work of revision been further delayed the inevitable result would have been that the various Christian bodies would have translated the Scriptures for themselves, and then the prospect of a common accepted version would have become utterly hopeless. Such a catastrophe has happily been avoided, and therefore an additional reason is afforded why we should be thankful for the issuing of the present version

In estimating the value of the work before us it is

absolutely necessary to consider some of the difficulties of the Revisers in the way of obtaining a text. If it be said that this was an easy task compared with what it was in A.D. 1611, we answer that, if the translators then found their work comparatively light, that facility arose from their not being bewildered, as our scholars are, with an immense variety of codices, and variations now reckoned by thousands.

The *textus receptus* of 1611 was built up almost wholly on the authority of cursive MSS., and they not of the most ancient date; while of the five great uncials that now sway the opinion of scholars only D was faintly known, and this, for some reason or other, was almost passed by. To-day we have no less than 1,760 manuscripts, including two uncials of unspeakable value of the 4th century, and two, if not three, of the 5th. The varieties in reading at the time when the Authorized Version was made were comparatively few, while to-day they are reckoned at 120,000. Such then being the facts of the case, the question arose, How were they to decide? Were they to accept wholly the text of some modern and competent scholar, or were they to make out a text for themselves as they advanced in the work of revision? They chose the latter of these two alternatives, and therefore by so much increased the difficulties of the work before them. Karl Lachmann's text claimed their respect and pressed for acceptance; but this work, however meritorious in its bold originality, is considered by competent scholars to be too exclusively the reproduction of the four great uncials to entitle it to be regarded as an absolutely correct representation of the inspired text. A similar charge may be made against the text of Tischendorf, which, though built up on a much wider range of MSS., is yet made to be the text of the Sinaitic codex, for which the great scholar had a strong but very natural leaning. There still remained, however, the most comprehensive text of all, that of Dr. Tregelles, a

perfect triumph of unceasing labor and accurate critical scholarship. Yet this could not satisfy all, for the simple reason that judgments differ, and therefore all advanced critics prefer making out a text for themselves. Such being the case, the Revisers had the herculean task before them of discriminating as to the value of 120,000 variations in the text itself, beside the further labor of translation; and that they have done their work so wisely and so well must be not only a matter of devout thankfulness but also an earnest that if further revision be thought necessary it will be conducted in the same impartial and critical manner.

Let us now briefly examine some of the rather serious changes the Revisers have made in the text; for as these are the subject of the greatest animadversion, they naturally call for our first consideration.

In Luke ix. 55 we miss the familiar words, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' These readings, however, are wanting in A B C $\aleph$, while D, the least valuable of the five great uncials, has only the first clause, thus proving that no authority exists for their insertion in the text, that is, if the evidence of the great uncials be considered supreme. The first clause is found in K, a MS. of the 9th century, M of 10th, U of the 10th, $\aleph$ of the 9th; in the Vulgate and some versions. In the face of these facts the Revisers could hardly do otherwise, and therefore we must acquiesce in their judgment.

The omission of the Doxology in our Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 13, is keenly felt by all, and therefore demands special notice. St. Luke omits the words altogether. A and C, being defective here, are of no value in the question. B D $\aleph$ and the palimpsest Z, a remarkable codex of the 6th century, all omit the words. Codex Regius, or L, a most valuable uncial variously assigned to the 7th and 8th centuries, contains the words, as do all the later uncials.

Codex 33, the queen of the cursives, has the passage; while of the versions, the Old Latin and Vulgate omit, while the Syriac and most of the Egyptian versions, in a more or less altered form, retain it. Thus we see that documentary evidence in favor of the passage is very slight. Origen, A.D. 230, and Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 350, both are silent; while Chrysostom quotes the words as genuine. Finally, in the opinion of such men as Tischendorf, Tregelles, Davidson, Scrivener, Alford, and many German and English scholars, the words are spurious, and therefore we must conclude that the Revisers were fully justified in expunging the words from the text.

Among minor omissions, we may observe the total suppression of the word 'fasting' from four passages: (1) Matt. xvii. 21, where the whole verse, 'Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting,' is omitted by B and **N**, (2) Mark ix. 29, the new version reads, 'This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer,' 'And fasting' omitted because wanting in B and **N**; (3) Acts x. 30, here, instead of 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour,' the New Version reads, 'Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house,' which is the reading of three of our best manuscripts, viz. B C **N**, and is that approved of by Lachmann, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort; (4) 1 Cor. vii. 5, here, instead of 'That ye may give yourselves to *fasting* and prayer,' the Revised Version simply reads, 'That ye may give yourselves unto prayer.' The truth is, the word 'fasting' has here no authority whatever, at least worthy of the name, and is only another proof of the strong tendency there was in the past to tamper with the word of God and make it harmonize with the ascetic spirit of the age. We may notice also the disappearance of the words, 'And Philip said: If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,' &c., as being wholly unsupported; as also the words, 'Who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit,' Rom. viii. 1. In nothing do we

see the value of the revision more clearly than in the boldness with which the Revisers have treated the text; for while being conservative to a fault they have brought all readings, however familiar and cherished, to the touchstone of documentary evidence, and then abolished or sustained them according as they stood the test.

From alterations in the text we will pass on to notice improvements in grammar, and the more accurately we do so the more clearly will we see the immense superiority of the new over the old translation. Indeed it could hardly be otherwise, for the scholars of to-day enjoy the fruits of over two hundred years close study of the Greek and Hebrew languages. The science of philology is better understood, while the principles which guided the Greeks in the use of participles, finite verbs, and prepositions have been illuminated by the labors of Curtius, Winer, Buttmann, and others; and when we consider that the present state of Greek scholarship was represented on the Board of English Revisers by such men as Ellicott, Lightfoot, Moulton, Scrivener, and Hort, and on the American by Thayer, Abbott, Short, and Hodge, an immense advance in critical accuracy was only one of the many results which might confidently be anticipated. Beginning with the tenses, we may say without exaggeration that the Revisers have literally restored the aorist, and at last given it the place assigned by aspiration. A notable instance of this may be seen in Eph. ii. 5, 6, where the Authorized Version presents us with a succession of perfects instead of the aorists of the original. In the amended version the gain is unspeakable, for now we have not only the advantage of accuracy, but the exhibition of a great spiritual truth, hidden by the old translation. This, of course, will be most apparent to those who understand the full force of the aorist: a tense which always indicates a definite and specific *act* and not a *state*. Thus we can appreciate the change from ‘God . . . *hath* quickened us together with

Christ, and *hath* raised us up together,' to 'God . . . quickened us together with Christ and raised us with Him.' In the first instance the idea conveyed is that of a present state of enjoyment arising out of completed past action, whereas in the second our attention is called to the fact that our whole salvation, from union with Christ in death to session with Him in glory, is regarded as already fully accomplished by that one great act of God by which we are made His sons. In other words, the moment when we by faith accepted Christ, at that moment did we also judicially die with Him; then were we quickened; then raised; then made to sit with Him in glory. Indeed, to obscure the force of the Pauline aorist is not only a great grammatical error, but it is the elimination of one of the strong points in the Apostle's teaching: it is to hide the ever-recurring fact, that while the believer is to work out his own salvation in fear and trembling, he is yet judicially regarded as rejoicing in all the benefits of accomplished redemption—as having not only died and risen again, but as being already seated in heavenly places in the person of his perfect Representative. Similarly οἱ τινες ἀπεθάνομεν (Rom. vi. 2), instead of being translated, 'We that are dead,' an expression which implies a state of death, now correctly appears as 'We who die,' a sentence which points to a definite act. So, too, the aorists, συνετάθημεν, συνεσταυρώθη, ἐθανατώθητε, in the same epistle, have been rescued from their former oblivion and made to express the exact language of the Apostle. Before, however, we leave the subject, two striking passages ought to be noticed. First, Rom. v. 12. Here the Authorized Version reads, 'And so death passed upon all men, for that all *have* sinned.' The latter clause is intended to represent the following Greek, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον, which, so far from doing, simply destroys its force; which is, not that death permeates mankind on the ground of each man's personal transgression, but that all sinned in Adam. Secondly, 2 Cor. v. 4, 'If one died for

all, then were all dead.' The second clause of this sentence is the Authorized translation of the following Greek, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον. Here also the English utterly fails to give the Apostle's meaning, which is, not that the family were all in a state of death, but that all believers did with the Redeemer die. Γέγονεν is no longer translated, 'was done,' but appears in its proper dress as a perfect, an improvement which may be noted in many perfects which formerly did duty as aorists. As regards the present, a tense to which our translators had strong objections, at least in some connections, the Revisers have earned our gratitude by restoring it to its proper place. The obliteration of the present in the Epistle to the Hebrews was a special injustice, inasmuch as it was not only faulty in grammar, but it hid from the reader the transparent fact that the Epistle was written while the Temple was yet standing. As an example of this, let us turn to the ninth chapter, where in the sixth verse we read, δια παντός εἰσίσαιιν οἱ ἱερεῖς, translated, 'the priests went always.' In the next verse, ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ is rendered, 'which he offered for himself.' While a little further on, προσφέρονται appears as 'were offered,' and so throughout the Epistle, presents are compelled to appear as aorists, and this for no other reason than that the translators thought the accurate rendering of the present inadmissible.

Passing by the enormous advantages obtained by a due observance of the article, we would notice the use of the preposition in the revised edition. In Rom. vi. 23 the Authorized Version reads, 'But the gift of God is eternal life *through* Jesus Christ our Lord.' In this case 'through' is given as the equivalent of ἐν; but, by the proper rendering of the word, we not only do justice to the word, but we alter the meaning of the verse: the gift of God is —eternal life *in* Christ; not merely life to be obtained through Him, but life in Him. How faulty, too, are such renderings as διὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἡμῶν, '*By* ye tradition'; διὰ

τὸν λόγον, ‘*Through* the word’; ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν, ‘In the the clouds.’ Indeed, generally speaking, wherever we turn we see improvement, and consequent gain, in the present revision; and whether we agree or not with all the amendments offered, we must all admit the work has been done in a scholarly and critical manner. The text has been purified, grammar adhered to, the English made more vivid and real; all which circumstances claim our respect and gratitude, and lead us to hope that, with a few modifications, it may speedily be adopted.

Having now said so much in favor of the present Revision, we may be permitted to add a few remarks on what we, rightly or wrongly, consider to be its faults. Under this heading we will examine a few of those passages where a totally wrong sense is, in our judgment, given by the Revisers.

We select first, as being most objectionable, 2 Tim. iii. 16, where we meet the words *πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν*, correctly rendered by the Authorized Version, ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.’ The translation now given is, ‘Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching.’ Now we are quite aware that this rendering has the approval of Alford, Ellicott, and other acknowledged scholars, and that these critics quote in support of their translation the authority of Origen, the Syriac and Vulgate versions; and, of course, if their evidence be supreme, we have nothing further to say. Any one, however, who examines the writings of either Alford or Ellicott will observe the hesitancy with which they, but especially Alford, give their opinions. Alford says: ‘I own on the whole the balance seems to me to incline on the side of (2), unobjectionable as it is in construction, and of the two better suited to the context, I therefore follow it, hesitatingly, I confess.’ Whether the passages he adduces as similar, and therefore as justifying his render-

ing, are really so, we must leave to the judgment of his readers; to our mind they are alien, and we would challenge the Revisers to produce one really similar passage translated, either by them or by others, as they have this one in question. The truth is, none can be found; and therefore we now produce (after Tregelles) two texts which, if rendered after the manner of our Revisers, would give a meaning self-evidently wrong.

2 Tim. iii. 16: Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος, κ.τ.λ. Heb. iv. 13: Πάντα δὲ γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχλησμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ. 1 Tim. iv. 4: Πᾶν κτίσμα Θεοῦ καλόν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπόβλητον. Translating the second of these after the new mode, we would have: 'Now all naked things are *also* open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' This refutes itself, for surely not naked things only, which men themselves can see, but all the hidden things are open to God's sight. The third text would also be ruined by the principles of the revisers; it would read: 'Every good creature of God is *also* nothing to be rejected.' But this was not the idea of the apostle; it was, on the contrary, that every creature was good and nothing to be rejected. No example of a similar emphatic καὶ having been produced, why, we ask, dogmatically assert that to be the right translation which is admittedly without a parallel? On Bishop Ellicott's own showing, Origen quotes the passage without καὶ, and therefore, as he had not the right text, it is unreasonable to expect the right translation. The same may be said of the Syriac; and while it is true the Clementine Vulgate also omits the καὶ, yet it is equally true, first, that no documentary authority exists for such an omission, and, secondly, that the Vulgate itself, in the oldest and best copies (e.g. the Codex Amiatinus), reads exactly like the Greek, 'Omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata et utilis ad docendum.'

So much for the text. The meaning obtained next requires attention. It is as follows: first, that there are

certain parts of Holy Scripture itself, not interpolations or glosses merely, but parts of the Law, the Prophets, and other sacred writings, which are not inspired of God ; and, secondly, that when we have a portion of Scripture before us actually inspired, the chief truth to note in connection with it is—that it is *useful* for doctrine. In other words, the object of the apostle was to lower the Scriptures in the public estimation, by teaching Timothy and the Church generally that there were certain parts of Holy Writ not inspired, and as the unfolding of a great mystery, that those which are so are *also* useful. Surely it was not like an apostle to do the one, nor did it need an apostle to teach the other. But our Revisers have made the change, and therefore they must decide whether they have not broken that law of theirs which stipulates that there shall be no alteration made in the Authorized Version except where absolutely necessary. Here was a translation supported by Chrysostom, Greg.-Nyss., Athanasius, Calvin, Wolf, De Wette, Tregelles, and others, altered for a rendering which they admit is doubtful. Was this necessary ?

The next passage to which I will refer is Eph. iv. 20–25 : ‘But ye did not so learn Christ ; if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus : that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man.....and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man,’ &c. According to this, what the Ephesians learned concerning the ‘old man’ was—that they ought to put him off, but neither the grammar nor the context appear to bear this out. They rather both point to the fact that at the time when the Ephesians accepted Christ they did then put off the ‘old man,’ and then put on the ‘new.’ Surely it is not natural, whatever special pleading may be made use of, to translate ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς, that ye put away : nor ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, put on the ‘new man.’ The plain meaning of the words is : That ye did put off the old man, and That

ye did put on the new. That this is the correct rendering is transparently clear from the following verse, which begins thus: *Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε, κ.τ.λ.*, which can only mean, 'Wherefore, seeing that ye laid aside falsehood, speak.' The apostle proceeds on the assumption they had already, by virtue of their union with Christ in death and resurrection, put off the old man, and therefore having stated the fact he goes on to say: *διὸ ἀποθέμενοι*, wherefore, seeing it is an established truth that ye did lay aside falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor. If they had had only a precept on the subject, why does he say *διὸ ἀποθέμενοι*?

From this passage we pass on to notice the emendations of the American Board, and the more they are examined the greater must be the regret that a larger number of them was not admitted into the text. We find, for instance, the English Revisers rejecting the following alteration: the Greek before them was, *καὶ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παιδία* (Mark x. 13). The American brethren translate this passage according to its plain simple meaning, 'And they *were* bringing unto Him little children.' In doing so they give the imperfect its due force, and therefore are strictly accurate. If versions were at all needed in so simple a case, they had the Codex Amiatinus reading thus, 'Et offerebant illi parvulos.' Yet this suggestion has to be rejected for the less correct rendering, 'And they brought.' For, John viii. 58, we find another suggestion similarly laid aside. The American Board would translate the words *πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί*, 'Before Abraham was born, I am.' This is strictly accurate, for it observes the distinction between *γίνομαι* as referring to temporal existence, and *εἰμί*, which expresses here the eternal Being of the Son. The same distinction is observable in the first chapter of the Gospel, *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος*; but when John describes the creation he says, *πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο*, 'All things *were made*.' All this, however, is now lost in the present

rendering, which conveys to the English reader the idea that the verb is the same in both instances. Indeed, of the American suggestions it may be said, they generally point to greater accuracy and closer adherence to the text. For instance, in Matt. iii. 11 they would read: 'He shall baptise you *in* the Holy Spirit,' instead of 'with,' as given by the English. The American rendering is certainly the more simple and natural of the two, and while we quite admit that *en* has sometimes the meaning of 'with,' yet it is not at all clear that this is one of its instances. Indeed, had the American Board been met in a more generous way, had their suggestions, for instance, been adopted in all those cases where no exegetical reasons existed to the contrary, and where the question was one merely of taste, the most beneficial results would certainly have been secured. Among these advantages we would mention a greater freshness to several passages more closely translated by them, and also the prevention of any volume, in which their emendations would be placed in the text, and the English relegated to the fly-leaves at the back. Moreover, there would then have been the utmost harmony, and the two committees would have stood or fallen by the general verdict. As it is, there are now two versions before the public, a circumstance which we cannot but regret.

And now, having said so much in the way of exception, we think it only fair to add that as a whole the work is one for which every student of the Word of God should give thanks. The gain to the Church at large is unspeakable, for here in its pages are the results of the most profound learning, the most accurate scholarship, and the most unwearying industry that could possibly be brought to bear upon the text; and if all are not yet satisfied, their bitterest opponents will have the generosity to admit the immense merit and critical value of their work taken as a whole. Their critics, too, will do well to remember, as they mourn the loss of old familiar words, that the Revisers

labored not for the *retiring* but for the *advancing* generation—that their work was not so much to see how many old phrases might be retained, as to provide a version that might fully meet all the critical demands of the day. Only in this manner could they hope to produce a translation which would merit the esteem of the Anglo-Saxon world, and be by its own intrinsic value *the* Authorized English Bible. And be it remembered, there can be no steps backward. The present Revision may be revised, but the old can never be resuscitated. Already the new is appearing in nonconforming pulpits, and taking the position so long occupied by the old; and therefore, to suppose that the Church of England can cling to the old, and refuse all favor to the new, is to suppose that she is indifferent to the value of a strictly accurate translation of the Word of God—a supposition which cannot possibly be maintained. No, the Church of England led the way in the past; and we trust will do so to the end. And if the storms of well-nigh three centuries have swept over her since first she moved in the matter of the Authorized Version, she will be found now only the more competent to take her ancient place in giving to the world at large a pure and accurate copy of God's inspired truth.

